The Yeti—Still a Question Mark

By ODETTE TCHERNINE*

My third book on this subject, *The Yeti Walks On*, has been delayed due to the unprecedented state of the world and national economy in 1974-1975, which has caused rocketing costs of newsprint and production, and uncertainty.

This is why I now reveal some of the latest documentation and personal encounters with relevant persons recorded in its pages, and even outside my new book's contents.

In May 1975 I met long-established contacts from America. We have been involved in mutual research. We had a mini-conference, and this impels me to offer my views which in certain cases have travelled some way from my original opinions, and to offer some of their views too. Our material now covers extra points of interest.

Credible news from original Himalayan venues in recent years, has generally only referred to footprints discovered in snow or soil. This year (1975) a Polish expedition in Nepal mountainous terrain found two sets of footprints, one larger than the other. The creatures that caused them were obviously walking together. So far, there are no photographs available.

Similar footprints and some sightings have happened too in wild regions of America and Canada. In Russia too tracks and sightings of a similar nature have been happening sporadically down the years—actually, down the centuries.

Now, the latest reports are of footprints and sightings in the Americas in 1973, in 1974, and during 1975. (As most students of this subject know, the mystery of tracks and sightings in America and Canada has existed for as many years as in the vast territories of the U.S.S.R.)

I was in Canada in the summer of 1973, during which some extraordinary news of encounters in a Maryland forest were reported. I contacted the relevant witnesses direct. Their confrontation with a hirsute animal-like, yet human-like creature is described in full in my new book. I was in touch again with the group concerned when I was back home in the United Kingdom. This was followed by news of incidents of the same nature from other wild parts of the United States. These too I recorded.

Here I must refer back to the controversial short film taken at Bluff Creek, California, in 1967 by the late Roger Patterson. This showed the alleged female Bigfoot. I saw the film when it was on television in Britain in 1968. At that time I was impressed, but also

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sceptical, and reacted rather like the probably mythical zoo visitor who on seeing a giraffe for the first time said he did not believe it.

But since then, the Russian scientists who are continuing the late Professor Boris Porshnev's lifelong research, applied expert and intensive tests to that film which René Dahinden (the Swiss-Canadian Yeti researcher) took over to Moscow when on a visit to Professor Porshnev. (I met Dahinden when he passed through London, and was able to get a little Press interest in him.) The Russian technicians in film and photography work pronounced the female Bigfoot film to be genuine.

I now feel I must accept their verdict, even while there is still controversy over this most extraordinary of all "movies."

Also, meeting the previously mentioned American colleagues (Peter Byrne, hunter, and researcher, and Celia Killeen) of the Dalles Yeti research station in Oregon, reinforces my new opinion of Patterson's film. Patterson's film camera seems to have caught the only evidence of something alive, fantastic, and a little frightening to the so-called civilised mind.

In research on work of this nature one travels by trial and error along a pit-strewn road to discovery—perhaps. Somebody may yet come along and try to prove that my conversion to the female Bigfoot's veracity is a load of rubbish. But this is not a matter to worry about.

Long-past records of other encounters, however, do provide fresh links in this search which I call Anthropo-Zoology. Though old, those links are fresh because our reviving them reveals their relevance.

Our May 1975 discussion included Gordon Creighton and Tim Dinsdale as well as Peter Byrne and Celia Killeen. Celia Killeen helps to edit the "Bigfoot" monthly produced at the Dalles research centre. Gordon Creighton has collected a great deal of Yeti data. He is an expert in a section of the Royal Geographical Society known as the Permanent Committee for Geographical Names, and he is a linguist, even knowing Chinese and Sanskrit. Tim Dinsdale, author of several books, is an expert on Loch Ness and that region's famous mystery. He is interested too in Yeti/Bigfoot/Sasquatch/Almasti questions. He has visited the Oregon scene of Bigfoot investigations.

Indian tribes of the remote north-west of the Americas once told how their ancestors knew that communities of giant hairy creatures existed at one time in the wilder regions of mountains and forests. But that these had diminished with the succeeding decades. Yet currently, some Indians still say that they are not extinct, but exist in extremely small groups of twos or threes.

As comparatively recently as 1927 an Indian hunter was captured in the far north-west of Canada by one of those Sasquatch giants. The man finally escaped wearing only his underwear. No doubt his outer clothes had been stolen by his captor or captors. He ran and ran until at last by some miracle of survival, he reached one of the

outlying missions of the territory. Though not an old man, his hair had turned white from his experience. He lived, but his character had changed. He would never speak of his capture. A similar experience is described in the Russian records quoted in my most recent book, *The Yeti.*

It was in recent months that Tim Dinsdale was in Dalles, Oregon. He told how he and a companion called upon friends who had a bungalow by a track cutting through neighbouring brush country. The terrain was reputed to harbour Bigfoot. When Dinsdale and his friend were leaving that night they said they would walk back to Dalles which was no great distance away. Their hosts said that they themselves never went out anywhere on foot at night, but always used their car. They would be too scared to walk in the region at nightfall.

Again, in comparatively recent times, a traveller hiking through forest areas there had a sudden face-to-face meeting with a wild hairy outsize creature. He backed away, very frightened, and shot at it to frighten it away only, but as it happened the shot was fatal. Before the traveller could examine the body, a hairy female form rushed out of the thick brush, picked up the corpse, and crashed back into the impenetrable forest.

Having achieved communication again with the Russian group in the "Yeti field," I plan to do so again with the Canadian end as I have done relating to American opposite numbers. I plan to return to Canada later this year.

I am trying to equate and compare the various characteristics of what now seem to be different types of the same distribution. But are they really and specifically the same? Is the repeatedly described Himalayan phenomenon similar to the one of the Russian mountains of the Caucasus or of the Mongolian image? Are the outsize entities of British Columbia and the American wilds their first cousins? Is this pure animal, or is this sub-human?

Apart from the various names attached to the problem in the Himalaya and the equally varied names in America and Canada, the Russians have always had a list of titles for it, according to region. From the list we come across Kaptar; Kiik-Adam; Almasti. Then we hear of Dev and Shaitan, names deriving from the U.S.S.R.'s Moslem communities. Both are descriptive of the Devil, or Bad Spirit, especially dreaded by older generations at one time. There have been so many descriptive local variations on the theme of the supposed wild man-animal or animal-man that those Russians who are concerned in current investigations have given the problem the overall title of *Relict Hominid* for the time being. Though I hold to my term of Anthropo-Zoology as a general name for this riddle, I think the Russians have hit on the right term to indicate the individual creature.

The incident of the visitors to friends in alleged Bigfoot country

showed that local fears are very real in some remote American regions. There is too a collective fear of the unknown in the Establishment minds of two continents. Consequently serious, consistent investigation is soft-pedalled now, just as it was in the past. This is especially so during phases of world turmoil. A few of the braver scientists consider there may be something sub-human in the uninhabited wilderness of the earth. But for most, this is embarrassing to contemplate; whether the suspicion suggests animal or human.

Fear of ridicule is another obstacle. There are good reasons. Hoaxes on a large continental scale must be ruled out as too expensive and complicated for anyone to implement. But trickery on a small scale does exist in the Americas when some individuals fake footprints and plaster casts for the sake of commercialism, or for sheer mischief. Again, there is a lot of Bigfoot publicity about, the name being applied to parks, eating-houses, and other spots of interest. One supposes it makes for good clean fun among tourists, but it does not encourage authorities in office to find out the truth.

Sonia Cole, authority in the natural sciences, has written a new book, *Leakey's Luck*, about the late Dr Louis Leakey of Olduvai Gorge fame. In it she speaks of the 1959 Nutcracker skull, found eroding by Mrs Mary Leakey, and proving according to Dr Leakey that the cradle of mankind was Africa, and not Asia.* The 1959 skull had a characteristic not very often quoted: It had a raised "crest" on top of the head. *A repeatedly quoted feature in Yeti descriptions has always been the appearance of a definite pointed ridge on top of the head.*

Linnaeus once wrote of the Snowman phenomenon by the term *Homo Nocturnus*—Man of the Night. The translation from Latin of his relevant document is in my book *The Yeti Walks On* but space here only permits me to say that some of the night creatures Linnaeus's document analysed possessed eyes that glowed in the dark; and this is an animal characteristic.

Sightings in America during the 1970s have reported this same peculiarity.

Sub-human or animal?

Neanderthal Remnant, or Unidentified Anthropoid?

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* I think there was more than one "cradle of mankind," even if this is presumptious of me.